

Moran: 'Pelosi Health Care Bill Bad For Kansas'

November 6, 2009

This week, I had the honor of meeting 30 Kansas World War II veterans at the National World War II Memorial. These veterans, who are in their 80s and 90s, were part of Honor Flight, an organization that brings veterans to Washington, D.C. to see the memorial dedicated to them. Welcoming these Honor Flight veterans is an incredible privilege and one of the most rewarding experiences of my time in Congress. As I visited with these veterans about the sacrifices they made for our nation, the friends they lost, and the love they have for their country, I was reminded how serious my responsibility is as a Member of the United States House of Representatives and I could not help but reflect on the importance of this weekend's vote on health care reform.

As Chairman of the House Rural Health Care Coalition, I know how important health care is to the survival of Kansans and their hometowns. The vote we take this weekend will affect all Kansans at every age - the proud aging veteran, the senior couple counting out their medications each morning, the young family just starting out, the children playing hide-and-seek in the yard, and the small business owner looking over budget reports. The decision we will make this weekend matters. It matters from coast to coast and across the sweeping Kansas plains. Our state has unique health care needs, different from much of the country. We have an aging population that is spread widely across a large area. I consider these unique needs in each policy decision I make.

Changes are needed in our current health care system. I have written about my ideas for reform and have shared them with folks back home and anyone up here who will listen. After studying H.R. 3962, Speaker Pelosi's health care reform bill, listening to the concerns of Kansans, and visiting Kansas hospitals to speak with doctors, nurses, patients, and administrators, I have concluded that the Speaker's 2,000 page bill will do great harm to Kansas and I strongly oppose it.

The Pelosi bill is essentially the same as the version that the Speaker started with months ago, except 1,000 pages longer. Instead of working to repair our current system, which the majority of Americans favor, the Pelosi bill would turn much of our system on its head by creating a new government-sponsored health care program financed by deficit spending and taxes. This bill levies taxes on businesses, cuts Medicare benefits to seniors, eliminates jobs with an employer mandate, and enables bureaucrats to define what form of health coverage is acceptable for Americans. The bill would create 118 new boards, bureaucracies, commissions, and programs to carry out its so-called "reforms."

I am especially troubled by how \$500 billion in Medicare cuts and proposed reimbursement rates contained in the bill will affect Kansas with our high per-capita population of seniors. Only in Washington does cutting billions from a near-bankrupt Medicare program seem like a good idea. These cuts will reduce benefits and raise premiums for Kansas seniors and make it harder for us find a doctor or nurse when we need one.

We strengthen our health care system by reducing costs. The Speaker's bill will do nothing to reduce costs and, in fact, Medicare and Medicaid's own actuaries have warned that the plan will dramatically increase federal health care spending.

The veterans I met at the World War II Memorial fought for a country they love and that country's promise of liberty and opportunity. After the war, these men and women returned to their homes and ventured off in different directions. Some rejoined families and jobs, some got married, some went to college, and some started businesses. But, one thing they all shared was a desire to continue fighting to make a better life for their children, a life better than the one they had for themselves. This is the desire that my Mom and Dad had for my sister and me and the one that my wife Robba and I have for our daughters. This is what we do in America - we leave the next generations better off.

I have concluded this bill will not make health care more affordable or more accessible for Kansans. I have also concluded that coupled with all the other bad ideas of this Congress - the stimulus packages, bailouts, Cash For Clunkers, and Cap and Trade, we will be leaving our children with more debt, less freedom, diminished personal responsibility, and fewer economic opportunities. Worse, we will have failed to honor the dreams of those Kansas soldiers for a better life for another generation of Americans.